

Remarks:

Applicant has studied the Office Action dated June 25, 2003, and has amended the claims to distinctively claim the subject matter of the invention. Applicants respectfully request entry of this amendment pursuant to 37 C.F.R. § 1.116 in that the amendment and remarks below place the application and claims in condition for allowance or, at least, present the application in better form for appeal. By virtue of this amendment, claims 17, 19 and 20 have been amended and claim 18 has been canceled. No new matter has been added. Support for the amendments is found within the specification and the drawings. It is submitted that the application, as amended, is in condition for allowance. Reconsideration and reexamination are respectfully requested.

Claim 17 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by Japanese Patent No. 2001-56946, issued to Yokouchi, et al. (hereinafter referred to as “the Yokouchi reference). The Examiner also stated that claims 18-20 are objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

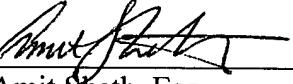
Claim 17 has been amended to incorporate the elements of now cancelled claim 18. Furthermore, claims 19 and 20 have been amended to depend upon amended claim 17, which now distinguishes over the Yokouchi reference. Accordingly, the rejection of claim 17 and the objections to claims 19 and 20 should be withdrawn.

No amendment made was related to the statutory requirements of patentability unless expressly stated herein; and no amendment made was for the purpose of narrowing the scope of any claim, unless Applicants have expressly argued herein that such amendment was made to distinguish over a particular reference or combination of references.

If for any reason the Examiner finds the application other than in condition for allowance, the Examiner is requested to call the undersigned attorney at the Los Angeles, California, telephone number (213) 623-2221 to discuss the steps necessary for placing the application in condition for allowance.

Respectfully submitted,  
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